



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

NORFOLK HOUSE SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Norfolk House School

Full Name of School	Norfolk House School
DfE Number	330/6027
EYFS Number	EY393691
Registered Charity Number	N/A
Address	Norfolk House School 4 Norfolk Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B15 3PS
Telephone Number	0121 454 7021
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Email Address	info@norfolkhouseschool.co.uk
Headmistress	Mrs Helen Maresca
Proprietors	Mrs Sylvia Challinor and Mr Jonathan Challinor
Age Range	3 months to 11 years
Total Number of Pupils	213
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (112 boys; 101 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 48 5-11: 98 3-5 (EYFS): 67
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Hayley Fox (Nursery); Mrs Rachel Hifle (School)
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	06 Mar 2012 to 09 Mar 2012

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed through the following link: www.legislation.gov.uk. Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the directors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Joy Richardson

Mrs Pamela Hall

Mrs Kathleen Silvester

Mrs Ros Ford

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Principal, ISA school)

Team Inspector
(Former Head of Prep, ISA school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Norfolk House School opened in its present building in 1967, as an independent co-educational preparatory school for children up to the age of eleven. It is a limited company with two directors who are responsible for governance.
- 1.2 In 2009, a 52-place Nursery was created in a separate, adjacent building. The Nursery setting provides day care for babies and pre-school children from 3 months to 4 years. Children from the Nursery usually transfer either to the school at the age of 3, or to other local schools at the age of 4. The school has a total of 213 pupils, of whom 98 are in Years 1 to 6 in the preparatory school and 115 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This number includes 34 children aged from 3 to 5 who attend full-time in the school setting, and 81 children who attend part-time and full-time in the Nursery setting. The Nursery setting is run by the Nursery manager as a separate department of the school.
- 1.3 The school and Nursery occupy two period buildings near the centre of Birmingham. The site includes a landscaped garden, a playground and an all-weather surface.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is well above the national average, with very few pupils having an ability that is less than average. Pupils who enter the school after the EYFS are assessed to ensure that the school is suitable for them. Most pupils transfer at the age of 11 to selective grammar schools or independent schools.
- 1.5 A small number of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); the school does not provide additional learning support. The ethnic backgrounds of pupils reflect the wide diversity of the area. Many pupils speak more than one language, but none are at an early stage in learning English. Norfolk House is a non-denominational Christian school and pupils are from a variety of faiths.
- 1.6 The school aims to provide a high quality education in a happy, caring environment that prepares pupils for the next stage of their education. It is concerned to develop independent individuals with self-confidence and self-discipline, and to promote links between home and school.

- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used in the preparatory school and throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The EYFS year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting - Nursery

School	NC name
Babies	Nursery (ages 0 to 2)
Toddlers	Nursery (ages 2 to 3)
Pre-School	Nursery (ages 3 to 4)

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting - School

School	NC name
Transition	Nursery (ages 3 to 4)
Reception	Reception

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school provides a good quality education and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education, in accordance with its aims. Pupils achieve well and reach high standards in literacy and numeracy. From the start in the EYFS, strong foundations are laid in basic skills. By the time they leave, pupils speak confidently, read widely and write accurately. They are highly competent in working with numbers. Pupils gain knowledge across a broad curriculum. Their achievement is underpinned by good quality teaching that is thorough and has high expectations of them. The best teaching inspires pupils, engages them in active learning and challenges their thinking. Some lessons lack opportunity for pupils to enquire and to think for themselves. Pupils' progress is checked carefully through regular assessments. Pupils gain knowledge across a broad range of subjects. Basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are practised but not widely applied in support of learning across the curriculum. The school offers a growing range of extra-curricular activities. Special events, including curriculum challenge weeks, enrich pupils' learning. The school is alert to pupils' individual needs and abilities, although this is not always reflected in lessons. Provision for those with SEND is underdeveloped.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are polite and friendly, and their behaviour is exemplary. They concentrate and work hard in lessons and are eager to learn. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and recognise that their contribution matters. Older pupils are caring and understanding of younger pupils. Pupils from different backgrounds work and play together harmoniously. The school does not yet draw sufficiently on the diversity of experience represented to extend pupils' cultural awareness. It provides good quality pastoral care. It gives a high priority to safeguarding pupils and ensuring their welfare, health and safety, and policies are implemented effectively.
- 2.3 The school is well led and managed, with effective support from the directors. The school has improved significantly since the previous inspection in 2007. The Nursery has opened and outstanding practice has developed in the EYFS settings. Across the school, the curriculum is planned better and progress has been made in improving teaching methods. The senior leadership team has a good overview of the quality of teaching and learning, and recognises that there is more to be done in sharing and extending good practice to achieve greater consistency. The separate EYFS settings in the school and the Nursery liaise effectively, and are developing closer links to enrich further the quality of learning through exploration and play.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Monitor the quality of teaching to ensure that the methods used engage and challenge pupils by promoting active and independent enquiry.
2. Take account of pupils' individual needs and abilities in the planning of lessons and provide tailored support for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
3. Develop the use of ICT to support teaching and as a tool for learning across the curriculum.
4. Strengthen links between the two EYFS settings to build on outstanding practice in extending learning through exploration and play.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 Pupils' achievements and learning are good.
- 3.2 The school is largely successful in achieving its aims of providing a high quality education and preparing pupils for the next stage of their education.
- 3.3 Pupils speak, listen and write fluently, confidently and to a high standard. They rapidly acquire reading skills and develop into enthusiastic and voracious readers. Pupils think logically and, when given the opportunity, they develop their own ideas and express themselves creatively. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. They are extremely competent in calculation, and are developing the application of their skills in solving problems. Pupils acquire knowledge in science, but are less skilled in working practically and carrying out investigations.
- 3.4 Pupils develop basic skills in ICT, although opportunities are limited for applying and extending these skills in their work at school. Pupils practise skills in a variety of physical activities that include football and cricket for the boys, netball, hockey and rounders for the girls, athletics and swimming. Skills in music and art develop well, as shown by pupils' singing and music making, and in artwork of good quality displayed around the school.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment in national tests at the age of 11 is well above the national average for maintained primary schools. Most pupils are successful in examinations to gain entry to selective grammar schools or independent schools, in accordance with the school's aims, and some are awarded scholarships. Pupils perform well in speech and drama examinations, and many gained success in verse and prose when speaking at a recent festival. Members of the school have been selected to play in a national orchestra. School teams have been successful recently in several football matches played against other schools.
- 3.6 Pupils make good progress. This is demonstrated in the results of regular tests and assessments, in the pace of learning in lessons and over time, and in the quality of their work. Pupils make rapid progress from the start in writing, including spelling and handwriting, in reading and in working with numbers. This gives them strong foundations on which to build in all subjects. Pupils with SEND make sound progress because of the support they receive in the course of lessons, though they do not have specific targets to work towards that are related to their individual needs. Pupils who are able, gifted or talented are given extension work on occasions, but their progress is sometimes limited by not being fully challenged to build on what they can already do.
- 3.7 Pupils' attitudes to work are excellent. They are highly motivated and develop a strong work ethic. They listen attentively, settle quickly and concentrate fully on the task in hand. They are well organised in lessons and in completing their homework. They take pride in gaining high marks, for example in spellings and table tests, and strive for accuracy in their work. They relish opportunities to work in groups on practical tasks, and to develop their own ideas. Such opportunities were often available in the curriculum challenge taking place during the inspection, though they are less frequent at other times.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision

- 3.8 The school's curricular and extra-curricular provision is sound.
- 3.9 The curriculum is largely suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. It is effective in its coverage of the requisite areas of learning and in preparing pupils for entrance examinations for their next school. Since the previous inspection, the school has extended opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, for example by evaluating their own and others' work. However, the curriculum does not consistently encourage independence as set out in the school's aims.
- 3.10 The curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced, while providing a strong emphasis on English and mathematics. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are included. In addition, French and reasoning skills are introduced from Year 3. Dedicated library time is scheduled for Years 1 and 2. The library has non-fiction books covering a wide range subjects, but a limited stock of fiction books.
- 3.11 The content of the curriculum is well planned for each year to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning. Although the topics covered are appropriate, too little provision is made for practical and investigative work, particularly in science. Pupils have few opportunities to pursue questions in planning investigations and interpreting the results. Provision for ICT, including access to the internet, has improved since the previous inspection. Each class has a weekly lesson in the computer suite, though the use of ICT skills to support learning in other subjects is not extensive. Pupils sometimes find out information for homework, but the skills of using books or computers for research are not routinely taught. Extended writing is rarely required except in English. Personal, social and health education is provided informally, and often effectively, though it is not planned systematically.
- 3.12 Much of the curriculum is taught by class teachers, with a small amount of specialist teaching, for example in music, French and physical education. The school identifies pupils who may have SEND, but does not provide a specific programme of support. The school keeps a register of pupils who are particularly able, gifted or talented in any area. It has made a start in providing additional challenge for them, for example in an English extension club at lunchtime.
- 3.13 The curriculum is supported by a growing range of extra-curricular activities that pupils enjoy, although the school lacks a clear policy for their provision. Some sporting fixtures have been arranged, and links with other schools are being extended. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder, and tuition is available in piano, violin, and speech and drama. The school choir is well attended, as is the football club. The school offers an extended day, providing suitable care in breakfast and after-school clubs.
- 3.14 The curriculum is enriched by a range of visitors to the school and by visits out, for example to a local science museum. Residential visits to the Isle of Wight are made every two years by pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. The school's twice-yearly curriculum challenge weeks forge links across subjects, and generate interest and excitement in learning. They draw on links with the local community, as when athletes from the area visited and coached pupils in Olympic sports. All pupils from Reception to Year 6 take part in the school's annual drama production.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Teaching contributes effectively to pupils' academic achievement and to their self-confidence as learners. It prepares them well for entry to their next school, in accordance with the school's aims. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. It is planned more thoroughly, with clear objectives. A wider variety of teaching methods is used in order to encourage more interactive learning. Pupils are sometimes challenged to apply their skills practically and creatively, but this is not consistent across classes and there are too few opportunities for independent enquiry.
- 3.17 Although teaching is mainly good and sometimes excellent, the quality varies. In the best lessons, teaching is imaginative and interesting. Pupils learn at a rapid pace, and teachers use a range of methods to bring learning to life. Pupils catch the teacher's enthusiasm and take delight in acquiring knowledge. Teachers question pupils skilfully to strengthen understanding, for example of word meanings, and to extend their thinking. There is a frequent exchange of ideas between teacher and pupils. In weaker lessons, teaching imparts information but does not engage pupils actively or probe their thinking. In subjects other than English, pupils often complete worksheets or provide written answers to questions rather than setting down their own thoughts in writing.
- 3.18 Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Basics skills in reading, writing and mathematics are taught thoroughly and effectively to a high standard, providing a strong foundation for future learning. Teachers manage classes well, with high expectations of work and behaviour which motivate pupils and enable them to succeed. Information and communication technology is not used extensively to support teaching.
- 3.19 Teachers have good relationships with pupils and know them well. They are aware of pupils' different abilities and needs, though these are not always taken fully into account in the planning of lessons. Pupils who have SEND are sensitively supported as individuals, though clear goals are not mapped out for them to work towards. Teaching encourages pupils who are able, gifted or talented to work diligently and to strive to do well, however does not always sufficiently prompt them to think for themselves.
- 3.20 Work is usually marked thoroughly, sometimes with guidance on how to improve. In some classes, targets are set that give pupils clear goals to work towards. Tests and assessments feature regularly, and results are recorded to give a clear overview of progress. Older pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' work, and they gain insight into their own learning as a result.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The personal development of pupils is good.
- 4.2 The school is successful in achieving its aim for pupils to become self-confident and self-disciplined. The strength of pupils' personal development contributes significantly to their readiness for the next stage of education.
- 4.3 Pupils are quietly self-confident and self-aware, showing emotional maturity for their age. They show a sense of wonder about the world around them and nature, as when they were amazed by calculations of the rate at which bacteria reproduce. They participate with enthusiasm in singing hymns and songs in assembly, and absorb the values that are explored in assemblies and in religious education lessons. They are thankful for, and appreciative of, the benefits they enjoy in life.
- 4.4 Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, and their behaviour is exemplary. They know the school's code of conduct and seek to abide by the rules. Some have a clear understanding of the principles that underpin the school's expectations. Pupils show respect for one another and are courteous and considerate in their dealings with other pupils and with adults. They work and play together amicably and show excellent manners. They co-operate and collaborate well in lessons, in pairs and groups.
- 4.5 Pupils readily accept responsibility in many forms, for example as class monitors, playground 'buddies' and prefects. They are eager to contribute to the well-being of the school community. Older pupils have opportunities to work with and support younger pupils and they do so with care and interest. They also contribute willingly and generously to charitable causes, locally, nationally and globally. Pupils elect representatives to the school council and its members take their role seriously in planning fund-raising activities and in representing the views and ideas of their peers in council meetings. These activities support pupils' developing social, political and economic awareness.
- 4.6 Pupils show understanding of Christianity as well as other major faiths. Their understanding is supported through visits to places of worship. They accept and appreciate that many different faiths, languages and cultural traditions are represented within the school. They enjoy learning about other customs, as when Russian parents came into school to show their traditional puppets. However, pupils' personal development is not systematically enriched by learning about the cultural diversity represented within and beyond the school community.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care

- 4.7 The school provides good pastoral care.
- 4.8 The happy, caring environment reflects the school's stated aims. This helps pupils to succeed academically and to grow in confidence. The school provides careful guidance in preparing pupils for entry to their next school.
- 4.9 The school effectively promotes good behaviour. The code of conduct and playground rules are set out clearly and simply in the pupils' handbook, with fuller explanation in the handbook for parents of how the rules relate to values such as respect and responsibility.

- 4.10 The school's guidance gives pupils a good understanding of bullying. Pupils feel safe and secure, confident that they can turn for help to adults or other children if they have any difficulties. There are some good arrangements, such as a 'worry box' in one class, which assist pupils in requesting help if they have any personal or academic concerns.
- 4.11 Pupils are strongly motivated, as individuals and in teams, to win house points for good work and behaviour. These lead to highly valued awards from the headmistress. Any poor behaviour is dealt with fairly and consistently.
- 4.12 The school cares for pupils while also encouraging them to care for others and to help in making its environment a good place for everyone. The school council actively seeks the views of pupils and acts on their suggestions. The school also surveys parental opinion, and responds to any concerns. Parents and pupils are generally well satisfied with the quality of pastoral care.
- 4.13 Older pupils have a good understanding of the needs of younger pupils and care for them responsibly when working together. This was evident, for example, when pupils in Years 6 and 1 jointly created an obstacle course on the theme of *Little Red Riding Hood*.
- 4.14 The school encourages healthy eating and the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle well. Pupils learn about the importance of fitness, exercise and a balanced diet, as richly demonstrated during the curriculum challenge week taking place during the inspection.
- 4.15 Pupils are well known as individuals. Information is shared informally and patterns of behaviour are monitored by the school's leadership. The school has a suitable plan for improving educational access for pupils with SEND. However, systems are insufficiently developed for recording and reviewing the progress of pupils who have difficulties in learning or behaviour to ensure that provision is consistently tailored to their individual needs.

4.(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.16 The school makes good arrangements for welfare, health and safety.
- 4.17 The school gives a high priority to the safeguarding of pupils and to ensuring their health and safety. The safeguarding arrangements are in line with official guidance. Appointment checks are carried out and recorded as required to ensure the suitability of staff, and criminal record checks are regularly renewed. Staff receive appropriate training in child protection that is kept up to date. Notices around the school provide a constant reminder about safeguarding, stating that it is 'everyone's business'.
- 4.18 The school has clear procedures for the administration of medicines, and for looking after pupils who are sick or injured. Staff and pupils alike accept responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe. Members of staff are appropriately trained in first aid. Records are kept of any accidents or injuries and the school has clear procedures for informing parents.
- 4.19 Suitable arrangements are in place to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Fire safety equipment is regularly checked, and fire evacuation drills are practised termly. Potential risks in classrooms, around the school site and on visits out of school are identified and evaluated. The school site is checked daily and any potential hazards

are dealt with quickly. The school is kept clean and due attention is given to food hygiene. The school's admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 The directors, as the sole proprietors, take a close interest in the school and Nursery, and support them in achieving their aims. The directors visit frequently, and the chairman of directors meets regularly with the headmistress and the Nursery manager to discuss management issues.
- 5.3 The directors support the school in evaluating its performance and planning for improvement. They have a growing insight into the quality of education provided but their overview is not always sufficiently informed by an understanding of pupils' educational development.
- 5.4 The chairman of directors is responsible for financial planning and investment in staff and accommodation. Budgeting for learning resources is increasingly delegated to the school and Nursery management, under the overall control of the chairman of directors. Learning resources are adequate. Provision for ICT is improving, but is recognised as requiring further development.
- 5.5 The directors know the staff well and provide guidance and support for leadership and management. Since the previous inspection, the Nursery has been opened in a fully refurbished building that is well equipped for its purpose, and further improvements to the school's accommodation are underway.
- 5.6 The directors are effective in discharging their responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection and for welfare, health and safety in the school and the Nursery. They call on the expertise of external consultants as needed in these areas. The directors ensure that all legal requirements are met.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.7 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, is good.
- 5.8 Leadership and management are largely effective in achieving the school's aims. This is reflected in pupils' good achievement, the securing of entry to selective senior schools, the provision of a happy, caring environment and the promotion of links between home and school.
- 5.9 There has been significant progress since the previous inspection in improving the quality of teaching and learning, and supporting the continuing professional development of staff. The school has developed effective processes for identifying its strengths and weaknesses, ordering its priorities and securing action for improvement. The leadership and management have achieved much in recent years, and realistic plans for further development are being implemented.
- 5.10 The senior leadership team fosters effective teamwork amongst staff and in partnership with parents. Teachers and classroom assistants work together well in support of pupils' learning. The skills and contributions of staff are valued and encouraged.

- 5.11 The leadership ensures that the safeguarding of pupils is given a high priority and that careful attention is given to all aspects of their welfare, health and safety. Staff understand their responsibilities, training is regularly updated, including that for child protection, and arrangements are implemented consistently and effectively.
- 5.12 The leadership has a good overview of the quality of teaching and learning, and implications for the recruitment, deployment and development of staff. Regular appraisals are carried out which identify areas for development. Staff meetings and in-service training address priorities for improvement and support the sharing of good practice. The school's expectations about teaching and learning are being articulated with growing clarity and shared understanding. However, the monitoring of teaching, and of work in pupils' books, is not always sufficiently incisive in pinpointing what could be better. Limited opportunities are available for staff to observe and to be observed by others in order to extend best practice.
- 5.13 Pupils' achievement is effectively supported by a thorough system of regular assessments. These are analysed closely by the leadership to check the pace of pupils' progress over time and to identify any gaps in learning.
- 5.14 Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate a high level of satisfaction with the school. Parents agree strongly that their children feel safe and happy at school, and are looked after well. They are well satisfied with the progress pupils make, the information they receive, the high standards of behaviour and the leadership of the school. A few parents are not fully satisfied with the range of extra-curricular activities provided. Although pupils benefit greatly from the increasing variety of what is offered, inspectors agree, as does the school, that this is an area for further development.
- 5.15 The quality of communication with parents is a strength of the school. The website offers full information about policies and the pattern of school life. Parents receive regular newsletters, together with a diary of events, and clear guidance about homework. They are able to contact the staff by email and can follow the school on social media.
- 5.16 Parents' evenings are held twice a year to discuss pupils' attainment and progress, and the targets set for them. Parents receive a detailed report on all subjects at the end of the school year. The headmistress also holds meetings with parents to discuss school choices for the next stage of education and the requirements of entry examinations.
- 5.17 The school handles complaints and concerns with care and in accordance with its published procedure. It operates an 'open door' policy and parents are encouraged to visit to discuss any concerns with staff. The headmistress and other staff are readily available to speak to parents at the start and end of the day or at other times by appointment.
- 5.18 The school is developing ways for parents to become more involved with its activities. It does not have a parents' association but parents contribute actively to school events and charity fund-raising activities. Parents are welcomed at sporting, music and drama events. They are invited to share experiences and expertise, as when those from different countries contributed to an international food event, and to the recent World Book Week. The school is seeking to extend such links with parents across the diverse school community in order to broaden pupils' horizons.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. Both settings are highly successful in achieving their aims. They enable children to become keen and active learners, extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Children learn and develop well because the staff are highly knowledgeable about children's development and respond with understanding to the needs of each individual. The well-being and safeguarding of children are given the highest priority and thorough risk assessments are in place. Continuous evaluation and detailed planning sustain high standards. The settings have improved since their previous inspection and have excellent capacity to continue to do so.

6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. The settings are well supported by the directors in securing high quality provision through effective and efficient use of resources. Careful appointment checks ensure that suitably qualified adults, who update their training regularly, work with children. Policies are thorough and promote equality for all. Regular monitoring ensures effective implementation. Parents are highly satisfied with their children's experience in both settings. They are actively involved in their children's learning and are kept fully informed about progress. Their views are listened to and acted upon. Staff teamwork is strong and day-to-day management is excellent. Self-evaluation is accurate, identifying clear priorities for improvement. The settings are developing closer links in order to share and extend outstanding practice. The Nursery setting, now in its third year, has become rapidly established because of its ambitious vision and the high standards it sets for itself.

6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.3 Provision is outstanding. The bright and lively environments indoors and outside, including the newly refurbished garden, provide many opportunities for learning. Resources are well maintained and easily accessible. There is a good balance between activities led by an adult and those chosen by the children themselves. The settings are highly effective in promoting all children's welfare. Excellent assessment and recording of children's learning and development help to identify the next steps and provision is adapted accordingly. In the Nursery setting, relationships between children and their key person are excellent, ensuring secure and sensitive care. For those under the age of two, home routines are followed as closely as possible so that the children settle quickly and happily. Staff gently guide them in exploring and trying out new activities appropriate to their stage of development. Two to three year olds talk about their activities with supportive prompting from staff. Three to four year olds enjoy a wide variety of interesting experiences. In the school setting, comprehensive planning and excellent teamwork by adults ensure that children learn and develop well. Adults respond to children's interests, and skilful support, through careful questioning and reinforcement of ideas, secures rapid learning. Foundations are laid well in reading, writing and working with numbers. Children make their own choices within planned activities, although opportunities for them to explore and develop their ideas in play are not always fully extended. Excellent behaviour contributes to highly positive attitudes to learning. Snack times and lunch are well organised, promoting children's independence and healthy eating habits.

6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. Children enjoy their learning, achieve extremely well and develop excellent personal and social skills. Those under the age of three become familiar with simple routines that begin to encourage independence. Three to five year olds learn to be helpful and co-operative, and to look after themselves. Children show an excellent understanding of how to be healthy and safe. In the Nursery setting, children settle quickly and eagerly to their activities. They develop valuable skills for the future, including a love of learning. Those under the age of three show a good understanding of early counting and mark making. They listen to stories with great enjoyment and begin to point to letters. Three to four year olds use a computer competently, for example to create pictures. They are curious and enquiring. They respond enthusiastically to challenges and are keen to demonstrate their skills in music and movement sessions. In the school setting, the children make excellent progress in learning. From slightly above average starting points, they reach, and most exceed, the Early Learning Goals. Children use ICT with enthusiasm and develop excellent literacy and numeracy skills. Three to four year olds enjoy forming letters, and make good use of the interactive whiteboard. They show good pencil control when writing and colouring, and develop a love of books. In Reception, children have a secure knowledge of sounds and letters, and write words and simple sentences independently. Children are encouraged to make choices and to solve problems.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

6.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.